

Glory Days

Newsletter & Devotional

October/November 2009

“We are a people of God, saved by Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit to worship and glorify God, communicate the gospel, and lead others to Christ.”



In This Issue...



Missions Message

In October we will be assembling We CARE packages. If you would like to donate any items or help assemble please contact Faith Thomas at 427-6436.

October 2009 Noisy Offering
Food Baskets

Items are needed for the food pantry. We will be preparing Thanksgiving food boxes on Saturday, November 21st at 9AM. If you, your friends or relatives could benefit from a food boxes this year please contact Pastor Cindy at 428-8347 or Faith Thomas at 427-6436.



November 2009 Noisy Offering
Matthew 25 Bags

~~~~~  
**Nominating Committee is in process of creating a Call Committee. Keep them in your prayers.**  
~~~~~

Family Directory

We have been taking pictures and gathering information from families to assemble a new Gloria Dei Family Directory. If you have not taken your picture please be prepared to do so at Church on Sunday or submit a picture to the Church office. You may also update your information at Church or by calling the church office at 428-8347.

~~~~~  
**Donations are still needed for HVAC!!!!**

*Table of Contents* Pg. 2

*Fellowship* Pg. 3

*Pastor's Piece* Pgs. 4-5

*What is Dialogue?* Pg. 6

*School News* Pg. 7

*Seven Hallmarks of ...* Pgs. 8-10

*WELCA* Pg. 11

*Jr./Sr. High News* Pg. 12

*Idols in the Church* Pgs. 13-15

*Calendar* Pg. 16

*Church News* Pg. 17

*Directory/Birthdays* Pg. 18

*Worship Asisitants* Pg. 19

.....  
**Book and Gift Shop**

is always open after Sunday service.  
Share the gift of love and see what's new.  
.....

[www.gloriadeisac.org](http://www.gloriadeisac.org)

# Fellowship

**Katie's Pride  
Women\*s Fellowship Group**  
*6PM - 8PM*  
*Sunday, September 13th*  
*Please sign up at the back of the church or  
on your white card to host or attend!*

**Book of Isaiah  
Bible Study**  
**Thursdays 9:30AM**  
**Fireside Room**

**Marty's Men Fellowship  
Group For the Guys**  
-with optional BBQ

6PM-8PM  
Sunday, October 4th  
Sunday, October 25th  
Sunday, November 22nd

Please sign up at the back of  
the church or on your white card to  
host or attend!

**Book of Revelation  
Bible Study**  
**Thursdays 7:15PM**  
**Fireside Room**

**Who Stole My Church?**  
Sunday Mornings  
8:30AM  
Hospitality Room  
Ed Marlow will lead the class.  
Sign up at church or call 428-8347

**Serving at St. John's Shelter  
4th Sunday of the Month**

Johanne Smith and Terri Jellesed are inviting all of you  
to volunteer with them at St. John's Shelter.

We need people that can cook, bake, serve or donate!

Please contact Johanne Smith 995-5429 or  
Terri Jellesed 519-2139 for more information.

***Women's Bible Studies***  
***"Mary A Woman For All Seasons"***

Kindness Circle  
Monday October 5th & Monday November 2nd at 6:30PM  
9051 McCoy Ave., Sacramento 688-3036

Peace Circle  
Tuesday October 13th & Tuesday November 10th at 1PM  
Call 427-0308 for location.

Love Circle  
Tuesday October 13th & Tuesday, November 10th at 1PM  
Call 456-4238 for location.

# Pastor's Piece

---

## Respectfully Disagreeing: How Dialogue Works to Transform Conflict

Much of this is stolen from an article for Excellence 2.0, by Peter G. Vajda, PhD. I've worked in my two cents throughout it as well.

One of the ways leaders, managers and pastors lead effectively is through conversation. that explore who we are, what we value, what we stand for and where we are headed. These conversations are about exploring new ideas and new territory together and moving into a future we mutually create.

Generally, in conversations about where we are going, we begin with "what is" - understanding our current reality. Looking at the current reality as "it is" as opposed to how we "wish" it were, is a difficult conversation. Why? Because our "wish" vision sees through subjective filters which often means we can become defensive and rationalize what we're seeing (or think we're seeing). Because these conversations are subjective, it is important that we engage in "dialogue" and not "debate." With dialogue, the conversation will move us into learning and learning leads to movement.

### Effective dialogue is built on trust!

Trust is the basis of dialogue. Trust allows people to express different world views, beliefs and perspectives in productive dialogue. Trust makes real conversation possible and where there is trust, defensiveness (read: ego) is reduced and learning can begin.

The problem with debate is that it is polarizing. Debate is an "I'm right, you're wrong." contest.

That contest is about winning, not learning. Do you experience trust in debates? Mutual respect? Openness? Empathy? Caring? Real listening?

When trust permeates a community, disagreeing on issues does not lead to debate, but healthy dialogue. Living with and into our differences is how the body of Christ is called to operate.

**When trust permeates a community, disagreeing on issues does not lead to debate, but healthy dialogue.**

When we are engaged in dialogue:

- We assume that many people have pieces of the answer.
- We work together toward common understanding.
- We explore common ground.
- We listen to understand, find meaning and agreement.
- We are able to reevaluate our assumptions.
- We choose to see all sides of an issue.
- We consciously admit that others' thinking can improve our own.
- We search for strength and value in others' positions.
- We keep the topic open even after the discussion formally ends.
- We seek to discover new options, instead of seeking closure.

So while we can see how debate is a powerful strategy for advocating a fixed position, dialogue is far better for inquiry, building relationships, and developing vision. The power of debate is that two polarized voices are free to "speak." The power of dialogue is that these voices can actually be "heard."

The goal of dialogue is to transform conversation from an attack/defense sparring into a time of respectful listening and desire to understand the other's

view. It is not to "win" or convert people to "the other side."

Dialogue, unlike debate, fosters engagement and commitment. As Steven Covey observed "No involvement, no commitment".

# Pastor's Piece Cont.

Your community can develop the clearest, most inspiring plans, BUT, if participants do not feel heard and are not engaged, if they don't feel like an important part of the process, and if their concerns are not taken into account through genuine dialogue, most likely those plans will not be well executed.

So, dialogue is what effective conversation is all about.

Take a look at your community. Is dialogue happening? Really happening? Honestly?

Bob Sains, who coaches groups on how to dialogue, says that preparation is crucial for conversations on difficult topics. This preparation involves explaining what is going to happen at the meeting and asking them to reflect on items such as:

- What kinds of disturbing conversations have you participated in previously around this issue and why did you find them disturbing?
- Are there examples you can provide of conversations around the issue that have been useful?
- What words relating to the issue do you find hurtful?
- What language might be offensive to those with the opposing view?
- What are your highest purposes for having this conversation, both for yourself and the congregation?
- Why does it matter that a constructive conversation about this issue be had in this community?
- What is it about this community that matters to you?
- What are you afraid might happen during this conversation that would cause you to regret your participation?
- What might happen that would cause you to feel your participation in this conversation was a good investment of your time and energy?
- What would it take to bring your best self to the conversation?
- What agreements or ground rules might help you bring this best self to the meeting?

Through their answers to these questions, participants begin to think deeply about the experiences that have led them to their position on the issue at hand, about what they value, about what they find hurtful and helpful in discussions of the issue, and they answer these questions as individuals rather than as members of a "side" or representatives of a position.

**So, our \$10 food for thought questions are:**

- Do you assume that there is a right answer, and that you have it?
- Do you engage, overtly or covertly, to always prove the other side wrong?
- Are you all about "winning"?
- Is your usual strategy to find flaws and make counter-arguments?
- Do you commonly defend your own assumptions as Truth?
- Do you normally see only two sides of an issue (i.e., your side and the wrong side)?
- Do you feel the need to create a winner and a loser and thus discourage further discussion?
- Do you often seek a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position?

# What is Dialogue?

---

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

*Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.*

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

*In debate, winning is the goal.*

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning and find agreement.

*In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.*

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

*Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.*

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

*Debate defends assumptions as truth.*

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

*Debate causes critique of the other position.*

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

*Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.*

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

*Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.*

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

*In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.*

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

*Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.*

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

*In debate, one searches for glaring differences.*

In dialogue one searches for strengths in the other positions.

*In debate one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.*

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

*Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.*

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

*Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.*

Dialogue remains open-ended.

*Debate implies a conclusion.*

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR).

---

## Preschool and Infant Center Enrollment

Our preschool and infant center has continuous enrollment. If you know a family who is in need of care for their infant or 2 1/2 to 4 year old, let them know about our program.

The cost for infants care has changed from:

\$995 per month for 5 days each week to \$870 per month.

The rate for part-time infant care has changed from:

\$850 per month for 3 days each week to \$750 per month.



## PTF NEWS

The QSP magazine sale is coming to a close. The school will continue to process internet orders sent to Gloria Dei. This fundraiser was extended through the end of September.

The PTF will launch their next fundraiser on Wednesday, September 23, 2009. Each student will bring home two (2) *Enjoy the City* coupon books. In the past the school has sold *Entertainment* books for a cost of \$40.00 each. The cost of *Enjoy the City* is \$20.00 per book. Please support this fundraiser and sell more books or return your envelope with the cost of the 2 books (\$40.00) or the books. If you have questions, please notify the PTF via the website or leave a message at 428-1137.

## TEACHER VACANCY

Mrs. Carr, a nineteen year veteran teacher at Gloria Dei submitted her resignation to the school. Her last day was September 21, 2009. Mrs. Carr will be greatly missed by staff and students. At this time, Mr. Gavin Chan has accepted a long term substitute position in the vacant fourth and fifth grade class.



## SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL

Our students have demonstrated outstanding performance on the volleyball court. The girls won two games in Modesto yesterday, Tuesday, September 22. The next games occur Thursday, September 24th at Town and Country. Girls game at 2:45 and Boys game at 3:45. Come out and support our teams.

# *Seven Hallmarks Of A Healthy Congregation*

---

Any congregation considering a turn-around process needs to start by assessing its health. But what is a healthy congregation?

Seven hallmarks of a healthy congregation are described in "Catching the Next Wave: Leadership Strategies for Turn-Around Congregations." They are based on understanding God's communities as a living organism with a spiritual life.

The inventory on the following pages provides guidance of how to begin.

Directions: Read the definitions of the hallmarks and check the characteristics that apply to your congregation.

Place your answers on the scoring chart that follows.

Keep your inventory to use in upcoming conversations using the discussion questions to process the information.

## **ORGANIZATION**

"Life bears intrinsic organization." Every part of the structure of a living organism has a function that keeps the organism alive. For a congregation to be alive, it needs organization that is clearly defined and well coordinated.

Characteristics of a congregational system that produces ministry:

- Prayer permeates and connects the entire structure
- Spiritual gifts of staff and members are identified and used
- Leaders are supported and trained
- Volunteers are recognized
- Volunteers are given permission to "get the job done"
- A streamlined decision-making process exists
- Staff works in partnership with volunteers
- Visionary pastor(s) and staff guide organization

## **GROWTH**

"Growth distinguishes living things from all nonliving things."

Characteristics of a congregation that is alive:

- Prayer-centered activities
- Intentional outreach into the community
- Positive congregational esteem
- Mission versus maintenance orientation
- Welcoming hospitality to guests at worship and other events
- Inclusion of new people into existing groups
- Creation of new groups for new people
- Willingness of volunteers and staff to "go the extra mile"

# *Seven Hallmarks Of A Healthy Congregation Cont.*

---

## **MOVEMENT**

"Movement generates energy and momentum. As individuals and as the gathered people of God, we are moving toward God's ultimate fulfillment of God's kingdom."

Characteristics of a congregation on the move:

- ❑ People living God's call, revealed through prayer, every day
- ❑ People want to grow spiritually and numerically and to find out how
- ❑ Fervent Spirituality
- ❑ A clear statement of mission and vision
- ❑ A clear sense of strengths
- ❑ A collective and individual faith that is willing to try new ways of sharing the good news
- ❑ A view that sees mistakes as learning opportunities, not failures
- ❑ Actions that address needs in the wider community

## **TRANSFORMATION**

"Healthy organisms metabolize; that is, they transform complex chemical and physical matter for use within the body. Healthy congregations serve the gospel by being communities where faith transforms individual members."

Characteristics of a transforming congregation:

- ❑ Prayer-strengthened commitment
- ❑ Preaching of the gospel
- ❑ Administering of the Sacraments
- ❑ Learning opportunities for all ages
- ❑ Opportunities for service in and outside the congregation
- ❑ Opportunities for sharing the faith
- ❑ Loving and caring relationships
- ❑ Spiritual retreats and enrichment events

## **SENSITIVITY**

Biologists use the term "irritability" to describe an organism's sensitivity to simulation in its immediate surroundings. A congregation needs the ability to sense that it needs to change and challenge and be ready to deal with the issues that can threaten to stop it.

Characteristics of a congregation that is sensitive to its surroundings:

- ❑ Receives guidance and awakening through prayer
- ❑ Openly identifies and faces conflict, rumor, and gossip
- ❑ Welcomes change when it supports ministry
- ❑ Evaluates programs for effectiveness, not by longevity or tradition
- ❑ Respects different opinions and perspectives
- ❑ Celebrates a variety of cultures
- ❑ Welcomes diversity
- ❑ Bridges generational gaps

# Seven Hallmarks Of A Healthy Congregation Cont.

---

## ADAPTATION

"Life adapts. The congregation as a living entity must also adapt to its context in order to retain its relevance."

Characteristics of a congregation that adapts:

- Prays to seek new ways to serve God
- Regularly reviews community demographics
- Celebrates new people in the community and supports them through outreach ministries
- Incorporates new styles and a variety of music in worship
- Uses visitor-friendly language
- Uses visitor-friendly worship styles
- Allows for spontaneity with flexible organizational structures
- Employs staff members who move beyond job descriptions to make ministry happen

## REPRODUCTION

"One of the most basic principles in biology is that living things come from other living things." The church is called to reproduce faith.

Characteristics of a congregation that reproduces:

- People of all ages are encouraged and taught to pray
- Intentional faith development for children and youth
- Leadership development for each new generation
- Small groups that meet human needs
- Multiplication of small groups
- Seminars and programs that reach unchurched people
- Active missionary support and work
- Daughter/satellite churches

## SCORING

Use the following scale to check the pulse of your congregation. Count the number of checks you have in each category and circle the corresponding number. Remember, no congregation gets a perfect score.

|                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organization   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Growth         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Movement       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Transformation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Sensitivity    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Adaptation     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Reproduction   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

# *Women of the ELCA*

11

---

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Sierra Pacific Synod

“Get Grounded!” Convention

November 13-14, 2009

Peace Lutheran Church\*  
Grass Valley

Keynote Speaker: Marva Dawn ([www.marvadawn.org](http://www.marvadawn.org))  
World Renowned Author, Speaker, Theologian

Theme Verse: “Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is in the Lord.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.  
It shall not fear when heat comes  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.”  
Jeremiah 17: 7-8 NRSV

Workshops  
Worship  
Fellowship  
Business Session

Registration \$50, includes 3 meals  
Optional Saturday dinner \$25 (with Children’s Choir & Gospel Choir)

Registration Deadline: October 15

Convention Goals:  
Provide a Time of Re-Creation, Physically & Spiritually  
Empower & Challenge Women to Return Energized for Service  
Accomplish the Business of the SWO

\*ADA compliant

Housing Arrangements made individually

Registration Form Enclosed

# Jr./Sr. High News

The GI FT of SAC will meet Sundays from 11 am-1:30 p.m. (trial times)

11-11:30 will be time to hang out play video games & pool, and just chill

11:30-noon we'll eat our sack lunches, or have parents take turns providing lunch for us!

12-1:30 we'll have games, fellowship, Bible Study, discussion time -dive into deeper God Stuff

GI FT (Growing in Faith Together) is the junior high group 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Graders  
&

SAC (Sundays After Church) is the high school group 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders

Will be meeting together on Sundays!



## PAINTBALL DAY

7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders

Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> 1 p.m.

Capital Edge Paintball

*estiMateD* cost= \$60 includes:

- Paintball with equipment & extra paintballs
- BBQ (potluck side dishes)
- Bible Study
- Fellowship with other Christians!

### Who can come?

7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders and their friends (who are also 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders)

### hoW do I reserve my spot?

Turn in a \$20 non-refundable deposit to Kirsten, Jason, school office or church office by Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup>

**More details to come after we know how many players there will be!**

**Parent Chaperones And Players needed!**

Please don't bring your own guns, we'll all use the ones provided so we have more equal advantage



# Idols In The Church

---

## POSSIBLE BLINDSPOTS IN OUR THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

I was a senior at the seminary when the late Warren Quanbeck preached a series of chapel talks on “Idols in the Church.” Somehow those homilies have remained in my memory bank over the years. I think his thoughts are worthy of some conversation today as well.

Professor Quanbeck talked about the Bible, the church and the sacraments getting more attention than the Gospel. We had been studying idolatry as a problem in the life of Israel and the early church, but wondered... certainly modern Christians don't bow to idols. Our struggles were against racism, materialism, greed, war and exclusivity, not those things that are so central to our faith.

Maybe idol is not the best term to use in calling for a critical look at our theology and practices in the church today. Idols in this article refer to those things we believe or practice that become substitutes or an escape from what is essential, what is primary, what is ultimate. Idols are not necessarily bad or unimportant. The problem comes when they get more attention than they deserve, or take our attention away from what should have first priority in our theology and practice.

I have been part of the Lutheran family for 75 years, educated in Lutheran schools and trained in orthodox Lutheran theology. I think I understand the importance of grace and justification by grace through faith. They were central in my preaching for most of my years in the parish. My church is important to me.

As Director of the Hunger Program of the former American Lutheran Church I was exposed to the pain and exploitation of the two-thirds world. When I talked about it, wrote about it and encouraged people to become advocates for the poor and hungry, I wondered why Christians were not more interested in addressing the root causes of the pain that people all over the world were suffering. I asked myself, “Why hasn't the Christian church taken the leadership in changing the values and structures that have messed up our world?”

It is not that we are not concerned about social problems of our day. We collect money, we bring food, we build houses for Habitat, we take mission trips to New Orleans or Mexico, and a few of us will even write letters to our representatives in government. Charity is important to us.

But when the hard facts hit the road we discover that nothing has changed that much. The rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer. In spite of all our charity and grace preaching we continue to dominate others, destroy the environment and support the status quo. Working to end poverty is not part of our theological discussion. We stand in long lines to receive the bread and wine but few stand in line to help those whose rights have been ignored or denied. We say the system to deal with immigration in our country is broken. I wonder if our theology is broken.

The Ark of the Covenant (a wooden chest) became very important to the people of Israel during the early part of their history. It contained the 10 commandments. They bowed down to it. It was where they experienced the presence of God. However, when it became an idol with almost superstitious elements attached to it, Jeremiah called for an examination of its usefulness. He told them to get rid of it. We all have our own arks that have become traditions and practices needing examination.

For example: the *Bible* we treasure has become an idol for many. It can so easily be used to distract us from what is central. How many years have we debated the gay/lesbian issue in our church? At the center of the debate is the interpretation of the Bible. It matters what the Bible says, but as Gerd Theissen reminds us, we need to discover what is essential in the Bible.

The Bible is not God. We may say that but live as though it is. When it comes to what the Bible says about sexuality we become literalists, but when it comes to what the Bible says about money we refer to the metaphorical use of literature by the authors? Are we not all selective literalists? When my interpretation of the Bible is the only correct one, then we can make the Bible an idol that distracts us from what is central to our faith.

Worship of the Bible might stem from our neglect of adult education in our congregations. How many have learned what the Bible is and what it is not? A twenty-minute sermon each Sunday will not do it. Perhaps the new Book of Faith initiative in the ELCA will help us learn how to read the Bible, how to interpret the Bible and how to recognize that the Bible is not God, but one of the ways God is revealed to us.

# *Idols In The Church, Cont.*

---

At one of our family reunions my niece told me that she and her husband were looking for a church where the pastor believed the Bible. “Oh”, I said, “Have you found some pastors who don’t believe the Bible?” She finally admitted that what she meant was that she wanted a pastor who interpreted the Bible the way she did. It can be a sign of arrogance that ends discussion when we simply say “But the Bible says.” Luther suggested that both the Bible *and plain reason* should be used in discerning what the Bible teaches.

The *Church* is another example of how something that we treasure can become an idol, something that can become a substitute for what is most important. After Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the state religion in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the church began to adapt itself to the ways that were patterned after the Empire. Since then we have constantly struggled with how to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus and remain in good standing with governing powers and economic systems.

George Barna and Frank Viola in their book, *Pagan Christianity* remind us how much of what we do in Christian gatherings each Sunday is not rooted in the New Testament but in the pagan culture and rituals of society. The hierarchical structures of church leadership today match the structures of leadership in the Roman Empire. Visit the consecration of a Bishop to observe what the authors mean. Or note how members sit passively in the pews while one person with authority announces the evangelical truth.

We tend to put more emphasis on the Sunday worship in a building than we do on loving our neighbor. I was made aware of this recently when one young couple in my *Practicing the Faith* class told me that they had decided to try being the church on Sundays rather than going to church. So each Sunday now they pack up and walk into the canyons of San Diego County near where they live. They learn to know the migrants who sleep there in shacks and have a meal with them. Word and sacrament are present in their effort to be church.

Our worship of the church is also manifested in ecclesiastical certitudes. I was asked to come up to the altar one Sunday during communion to read the words of institution in the liturgy. The intern who was leading worship and preaching that day had not yet received ordination. He could do everything except say the words of institution, according to the rules as explained by the Bishop. He could preach and pray but not say certain words in the Eucharistic liturgy. Some idols are hard to let go of.

Another practice in the church that can become an idol is the *Sacraments*. Keep in mind that an idol can be a good thing, important, but something that diverts our attention away from what is primary and essential. A study of the history of the sacraments in the church can be helpful in learning about the evolution of their development. The sacraments can be either helpful or distracting in our calling to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.”

The Hunger Times, a tabloid used by the Hunger Programs of the three predecessor bodies of the ELCA quoted an Episcopalian bishop who said, “I want the congregations in my diocese to be as energized and active in feeding the poor as they are in participating in the Eucharist.” A few Sundays ago we had a letter writing Sunday in our parish. Almost everyone lined up to come forward to receive the elements at the Eucharist and experience the presence of Jesus. I wish there had been that same line of people willing to write a letter on behalf of the poor and hungry in the world.

What would be wrong with a church that reminded its members that they would experience the presence of Jesus in the lives of the excluded in their community as much as they did in the sacraments? Is not this good biblical theology? What happened to the sacrament that Jesus instituted for us just before he was executed. I mean the practice of washing one another’s feet....(or hands if it is easier)? Jesus’ command to *do this* is just as important as the *do this* in the communion liturgy.

James 1:27 reminds us that pure religion is experienced in our ministry to the widows and orphans. An idol can be a substitution or distraction

I wonder if our emphasis on *Reformation Theology* has become an idol in the Lutheran church. It is almost as though we need to get permission from Martin Luther before we can take a stand or talk about changing our theological perspectives.

An idol can be something that has served a good purpose but has become a practice or doctrine that has overshadowed a more important truth or current reality.

# Idols In The Church, Cont.

---

No one would suggest that we are not saved by grace or that our own efforts or beliefs can earn us any merits toward our salvation. What has challenged me to think about grace alone as an idol was a chapter in Walter Brueggemann's book, *The Covenanted Self*. He questions the use of the word "alone" that Luther places together with the word grace. Brueggemann suggests that Lutheran theology of grace is Paul's or Augustine's interpretation of Jesus, and may be a misreading of Paul. Has "alone" become a distraction or escape mechanism from ethical living...from obedience to Christ's commandment to love our neighbor? Could it be that our emphasis on grace has led us to be less active in the Kingdom work of making a difference in the world? I know what our theology says. If we preach grace enough people will respond by loving their neighbor. Has it worked that way? Really? Was it the lack of grace preaching that led to the rise of the Third Reich in the 30's?...to apartheid in South Africa?...to slavery in our country both before and after the civil war?...to the opposition to equal rights for women and minorities only a few decades ago?...to the treatment of Native Americans by Christians in our early history?...to our continued support for war and exploitation of less developed countries?...to our destruction of the environment in modern times? Was it "grace alone" that was missing? I don't think so.

It was a good Lutheran pastor in Germany who, during the second World War, said, "We have gathered like eagles around the carcass of cheap grace and there we have drunk the poison that has killed the life of following Jesus. We have given away the Word and Sacraments wholesale without asking awkward questions....We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus was hardly ever heard." From *Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Do I dare suggest this next possible idol in the church? Have we made an idol of *Jesus* in our theology and practice? In Mark 10:18 Jesus passed off a compliment by saying, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." On other occasions Jesus shifted the attention away from himself as God so that the focus could be on something more important; his teaching about the Kingdom of God.

This need not take away the divinity of Jesus or the important teaching of the incarnation. Where we get tripped up is in our devotion to Jesus that has distracted us from Jesus' teachings. Has our attention to the son of Mary and Joseph become an escape from the responsibility to carry out his mission?

In the Apostle's creed we confess what is central to our faith. But nothing is said in this ancient creed about what Jesus taught...his message...his invitation to follow him. Does this mean that beliefs about who Jesus is; his birth, death and resurrection are more important than our relationships to each other and to creation? Much of idolatry can be on an unconscious level. It can be a tradition never really examined.

In a book of sermons by Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Answers to Real Problems* there is a sermon entitled, "The Peril of Worshiping Jesus." He says the world has tried two ways to get rid of Jesus. One was to crucify him. When that didn't work they used a more subtle technique. They worshiped him. To escape his moral insights and ethical demands, Fosdick says, the world has dressed him up in elaborate metaphysical creeds and sacramental adoration. Jesus never said, "Worship me!" He said, "Follow me!"

What then is the essential, the ultimate, the most important element in our theology and practice? Is it not the Kingdom of God, love of God and neighbor? I have suggested that there are theological blind spots that have kept us from dealing with our global crisis, the inequalities that are a matter of life and death to millions of people in today's world. We need some critical reflection on what these blind spots are. You may have a different list.

Following the holocaust it was said that, "no theological statement should be made that is not credible in the presence of burning children." How might we state that differently to fit our situation today? Joerg Rieger in his book, *God and the Excluded* says that we need to become aware of how our theology has led to our complicity in the current structures that have contributed to the exclusion of so many from the abundant life Jesus talked about.

One thing that can help us in this critical self-reflection is a willingness to listen to those who have been and are excluded. When I took a few members of the church I served in Long Beach, CA to Latin America to learn about hunger and exploitation, my theology was challenged. Since then the person and teachings of Jesus have new meaning for me. I have had to change some of my theology. Maybe Brian McLaren is right when he says, *Everything Must Change*. I do not claim any certainty in my conclusions. I do have some questions. What I wish for is more conversation.

# Calendar

## October

1st

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

4th - World Communion Sunday

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30Am - Service

6PM-8PM - Marty's Men

5th

6:30PM - Kindness Circle

6th

Noon - Senior Luncheon

7th

8:25AM - Chapel

8th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

**11th - Pastor Appreciation Sunday**

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

After Service ~ Elders Meeting

6PM-8PM - Katie's Pride

**12th - Columbus Day**

13th

1PM - Peace Circle

1PM - Love Circle

14th

8:25AM - Chapel

6PM - School Board Meeting

15th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

18th

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

21st

8:25AM - Chapel

22nd

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

**25th - Reformation Sunday**

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

Serving at St. John's Shelter

6PM-8PM - Marty's Men

26th

Council Meeting

28th

8:25AM - Chapel

29th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

**31st - Reformation Day**

## November

**1st - Daylight Savings Ends**

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

4th - World Communion Sunday

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

2nd

6:30PM - Kindness Circle

4th

8:25AM - Chapel

5th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

7th

8AM-Noon - Neighborhood Outreach & Rummage Sale

8th

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

After Service ~ Elders Meeting

6PM-8PM - Katie's Pride

10th

Noon - Senior Luncheon

1PM - Peace Circle

1PM - Love Circle

11th - Veteran's Day

6PM - School Board Meeting

12th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

13th & 14th

WELCA Convention

15th

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

18th

8:25AM - Chapel

19th

9:30AM - Book of Isaiah Bible Study

7:15PM - Book of Revelations Bible Study

22nd

8:30AM - Who Stole My Church

9:30AM - Service

Serving at St. John's Shelter

6PM-8PM - Marty's Men

# Church News

Senior Luncheon  
Noon  
October 6th  
November 10th



October 11th

School Board Meeting

October 14th  
November 11th

Saturday  
November 7th

Neighborhood Outreach  
Church & Neighborhood  
Rummage Sale  
8AM - Noon



Followed by a cookout hosted by Gloria Dei. The cookout gives us a chance to meet and socialize with our neighbors. We will close with a bilingual service in the sanctuary.

October 12th

Elders Meeting  
After Service in Cindy's Office  
Sunday, October 11th  
Sunday, November 8th



October 25th ~ Reformation Sunday  
October 31st ~ Reformation Day

We need volunteers to:

- Distribute flyers to surrounding blocks.
- Assist with coffee, water, and donuts in the morning.
- Assist with setup in the morning.
- Bring potluck side dishes & desserts for lunch. (These can be dropped off)
- Help set up and clean up for Lunch
- Grill at the cookout.

Contact Pastor Cindy at 428-8347 or Ed Marlow at 685-6313 to help or for more information

Every Wednesday

Except November 11th & 25th  
8:25AM



November 1st

Church Council Meeting  
October 26th  
November 23rd

Community Thanksgiving Service  
November 25th 7PM

Give Thanks with a grateful heart

Veterans Day  
November 11th

If you would like to purchase altar flowers for \$55 please sign up in the back of the church.

- October 25th ~ Eric & Bridget Malme celebrating their Anniversary
- November 8th ~ Karen Russ for Nick's Birthday
- November 15th ~ Karen Russ in memory of her Dad
- November 22nd ~ Roxanne Moger for Meghan's 17th Birthday
- November 29th ~ Edd & Johanne Smith celebrating their 45th Anniversary



# Directory/ Birthdays



## Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and School Office Staff

**Church Office x200**  
**(916) 428-8347**

**Interim Pastor**  
**Cindy Beck x218**  
gdpastorcindy@sbcglobal.net

**Church Secretary**  
**Melessa Hazelton x200**  
gdsecretary@sbcglobal.net

**Minister of Youth & Family-**  
**Kirsten Moore x220**  
kirs10moore@sbcglobal.net

**Bookkeeper**  
**Johanne Smith x200**  
gdbookkeeper@sbcglobal.net

**Custodian**  
**Dana Young X201**

---

**School Office (916) 428-1127**  
**Fax # 428-2766**  
**Preschool 428-1136**

**Interim Executive Director**  
**Shiela Gibson X 222**  
principal@gloriadeilutheranschool.org

**Pre School Director**  
**Miasha Henry**  
**428-1136**  
preschool@gloriadeilutheranschool.org

**School Bookkeeper**  
**Elaine Haak x223**  
ehaak@gloriadeilutheranschool.org

**Parent Participation Coordinator**  
**Susan Little X 225**  
slittle@gloriadeilutheranschool.org

## October

- 1st - Sarah Miller
- 2nd - Peggy Manlapig
- 2nd - Karen Weske
- 2nd - Jack Wyatt
- 3rd - Patrick O'Day
- 3rd - Ernesto Rico
- 5th - Tyler Noguchi
- 7th - Pam Andrews
- 7th - Norman Boden
- 7th - Ad Kohler
- 7th - Erin Renfro
- 9th - Letha Smith
- 9th - Jim VanGundy
- 11th - Doris Karlsatd
- 11th - Tony Runge
- 11th - Evan Witt
- 14th - James Lovallo
- 14th - Dawn Wellborn
- 15th - Kevin Christensen
- 15th - Daniel Hall
- 15th - Harriet Price
- 17th - Kaley Matthew
- 17th - Katy petersen-Leiser
- 18th - Kim Dornback
- 20th - Nancy Manlapig
- 21st - Della Schneider
- 24th - Kathleen Marlow
- 25th - Derek VanGundy
- 26th - Kim Evans
- 28th - Lamari Blue-Johnson
- 28th - Julianne Jones
- 28th - Rosalie Wilson
- 29th - Helen Beith
- 30th - Vicki Ibarra
- 31st - Maria Ruibal

## November

- 1st - Eunice Kaseman
- 1st - Kathryn Lopez
- 3rd - Colin O'Day
- 4th - Carol Church
- 4th - Dawn Hall
- 4th - Kelly Meyer
- 5th - Donna Kiser
- 5th - Nicholas Russ
- 7th - Melessa Hazelton
- 7th - Roxanne Moger
- 8th - Scotty Rohrer
- 8th - Tom Taylor
- 11th - Patti Roberts
- 11th - Shaun Stinson
- 11th - Kari VanGundy
- 11th - Hal Weber
- 14th - Noel Hesser
- 15th - Michelle Bisping
- 15th - Eduardo Rico
- 16th - Miki Yomogida
- 17th - Amy Johnson
- 19th - Katie Asher
- 20th - Johanne Smith
- 21st - Kirsten Moore
- 22nd - Kristie Garcia
- 22nd - Hunter Hall
- 22nd - Sara Noguchi
- 22nd - James Rowland
- 24th - Allison Dutton
- 24th - Meghan Kennedy
- 24th - Florence Millers
- 24th - Kim Rowland
- 25th - Josef Nairn
- 26th - Gus Rojas
- 26th - Alison Soper
- 26th - Suzan Torres
- 27th - Darrin Noguchi
- 29th - Corey McConachie

# WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



## Altar Guild

**October 4th**

Faith Thomas, Tanya Koppel, Esther & Don Jenks

**October 11th**

Johanne Smith, Candy Bevill & Carol Reynolds

**October 18th**

Jeanne Cassella, Barbara Manlapig & Jessica Jones

**October 25th**

Dana Young, Terri Jellesed & Heidi Jellesed

**November 1st**

Paula Smith, Jennifer Petersen & Gwen Petersen

**November 8th**

Eunice Kaseman, Maria Boden & Florence Millers

**November 15th**

Faith Thomas, Tanya Koppel, Esther & Don Jenks

**November 22nd**

Johanne Smith, Candy Bevill & Carol Reynolds

**November 26th - Thanksgiving**

Jeanne Cassella, Barbara Manlapig & Jessica Jones

**November 29th**

Dana Young, Terri Jellesed & Heidi Jellesed

## Acolytes

**October 4th** ~ Taylor Barth & Lauren Andrews

**October 11th** ~ Kelly Bradley & Lamari Blue

**October 18th** ~ Samantha Kepler & Ryan Dennis

**October 25th** ~ Julieanna Lopez & Alex Wyatt

**November 1st** ~ Nathan Davis & Aubrey Hall

**November 8th** ~ Christian Dennis & Mikey Forester

**November 15th** ~ Taylor Barth & Lauren Andrews

**November 22th** ~ Kelly Bradley & Lamari Blue

**November 26th** ~ Samantha Kepler & Ryan Dennis

**November 29th** ~ Julieanna Lopez & Alex Wyatt

## Communion Assistant

**October 4th** ~ Harlan & Donna Christensen

**October 11th** ~ Fil & Shirley Cardella

**October 18th** ~ Dana Young & Madelyn Flink

**October 25th** ~ Johanne Smith & Karen Ingalls

**November 1st** ~ Candy Bevill & Julianne Jones

**November 8th** ~ Vicki & Bob Ibarra

**November 15th** ~ Don & Esther Jenks

**November 22nd** ~ Faith Thomas & Lawana McElroy

**November 26th** ~ Faren Johnson & Leamon King

**November 29th** ~ Harlan & Donna Johnson

## Lector

**October 4th** ~ Missy Roberts

**October 11th** ~ Phil Petersen

**October 18th** ~ Nick Manlapig

**October 25th** ~ Barbara Manlapig

**November 1st** ~ Fil Cardella

**November 8th** ~ Roxanne Moger

**November 15th** ~ Maria Boden

**November 22nd** ~ Sylvia Kohler

**November 29th** ~ Faren Johnson

## Usher

**October 4th**

Jeanne Cassella, Lawana McElroy, Laura Little & Maria Boden

**October 11th**

Mike Davis, Brian Davis, Frank Kohlbaker, & Ted Holm

**October 18th**

Jeff Jensen, Jodie Jensen, Jason Dennis & Gabriel Kiser

**October 25th**

Matt Moore, Terri, Ben & Heidi Jellesed

**November 1st**

Kyle Smith, Sam Kiser, Megan Kennedy & Sara Manlapig

**November 8th**

Melissa Roberts, Patty Roberts & Leamon King

**November 15th**

Jeanne Cassella, Lawana McElroy, Laura Little & Maria Boden

**November 22nd**

Mike Davis, Brian Davis, Frank Kohlbaker, & Ted Holm

**November 29th**

Jeff Jensen, Jodie Jensen, Jason Dennis & Gabriel Kiser

## Elder

**October 4th** ~ Fil & Shirley Cardella

**October 11th** ~ Madelyn Flink

**October 18th** ~ Lucy Taylor & Lois Norris

**October 25th** ~ Faith Thomas & Elizabeth Haiberg

**November 1st** ~ Phil Petersen & Leamon King

**November 8th** ~ All Elders

**November 15th** ~ Fil & Shirley Cardella

**November 22nd** ~ Madelyn Flink & Leamon King

**November 29th** ~ Lucy Taylor & Lois Norris



**Join Us for  
Sunday Service at 9:30AM**

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
4910 Lemon Hill Avenue  
Sacramento, California 95824

**Change Service Requested**

**Dated Material- Please Rush**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit #754  
Sacramento, CA